

# Christianity and Crisis

*A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion*



Volume II, No. 16

October 5, 1942

\$1.50 per year; 10 cents per copy

## Common Counsel for United Nations

WE MAY draw dozens of blueprints for the post-war world, but the most important plans for the mutual relations of the nations after the war are being fashioned by the actual practices of the nations during the war. The so-called United Nations must be the nucleus for any new world order; their ability to work together must be the foundation of political arrangements of the future; and their practices must become the precedents for future cooperation.

We therefore ought to dream less of future ideal plans of reconstruction and look more closely to what we are doing now. What we are doing is not too reassuring. The United Nations are not much more than a paper organization. There is a Pacific war council, but there is no general war council. The fact is that military strategy is pretty much under the control of Washington, chiefly because our war potential, though not our immediate military strength, is greater than that of any other of the United Nations. We confer with Britain, Russia and China, but we do not really have common counsel in genuinely mutual terms. Political, as distinct from military, strategy remains, on the other hand, under the control of Britain because of her previous strategic position as the center of a great empire, extended over the earth and everywhere involved in the world conflict. It is not good that we should control military strategy as exclusively as seems to be the case; and the dominance of Britain in political strategy is not wise either.

There are two particular danger spots where the exclusive British control of political strategy is harmful to our common effort. The one is Palestine. Most of the money and energy which has gone into the building of Palestine has come from American Jews. American Jews have a very particular stake in the problems of the Middle East, and they feel particularly aggrieved because imperial considerations prevent the full exploitation of Palestinian resources for the defense of the Middle East.

The other danger spot is India. India may be invaded at any moment by Japan. Yet her defense is complicated by a seemingly insoluble problem. If she is granted the immediate independence which the Congress party desires, it is likely that civil war between Hindus and Moslems would break out and destroy the defense of India. On the other hand, the present situation is equally intolerable. The jailing of Congress leaders and the strict censorship, which prevents news of the real situation from leaking out, is in shocking contradiction to the ideals of the democratic nations.

In this impasse a new venture is called for. Churchill's intransigent attitude has a catastrophic influence upon the whole problem. Churchill's great achievements as leader of an embattled nation cannot hide the fact that the Indian policy has been a blind spot for years in his career. He has been consistently wrong about India; just as wrong as American liberals, particularly religious liberals who regard Gandhi as a kind of second Christ and are therefore certain that any policy pursued by him must be right. Churchill has been as wrong as the uninformed American opinion which imagines that there is a simple solution for the Indian problem.

The Cripps proposals, upon which Britain now stands, were indeed generous. It may be that they failed partly because the Indians were actually loath to assume political responsibility at this moment, and partly because Gandhi's prestige as a saint would have been imperiled by their acceptance. His dogmatic adherence to non-violence as a way of salvation would have been put to a severe test by the formation of a responsible government. Now he can continue to believe and declare that if the Indians had responsibility for the defense of their country, they would prove the adequacy of non-violent non-cooperation, despite the proof in Norway and Europe generally that non-cooperation does not defeat a resolute foe.

But on the other hand, it must be recognized that

the Cripps offer did contain the peril of a permanent partition of India, and that the policy of the Moslems drives toward such a partition. Americans who fought a civil war in order to prevent partition ought to have some sympathy for those who regard it as a great evil.

Without, therefore, offering any easy way out of the tragic impasse, we suggest that a commission, upon which China, America, Russia and some of the smaller nations would be represented, might bring fresh viewpoints to the problem and would be able to offer more solid moral guarantees than a single nation. It has become the fashion of some commentators and editorial writers to criticise the Indians for imperiling the common defense of the United Nations. If this is true, as it undoubtedly is, it proves

that the United Nations have a stake in the solution of the problem and that it transcends the narrow category of Anglo-Indian relations.

Here, in other words, is a splendid opportunity for implementing not only the democratic ideals of freedom but the ideals of mutual counsel, which must be embodied in a post-war settlement. How will problems be solved in a post-war world, if they are not dealt with by new mechanisms of mutual counsel and by broader constitutional arrangements than now exist?

If the future requires these new adventures in statecraft, why not make the first ventures now, when the urgency of the situation prompts them and increases the possibilities of their success?

R. N.

## The Church in World Wars I and II

SAMUEL McCREA CAVERT

**T**WICE within a single generation the churches of America have faced the necessity of orienting themselves to the fact of world war. We ought to be able to find some illumination for 1942 in the experience of 1917-1918. This article is an attempt to review some of the trends in the life of the churches during the earlier period by way of comparison with the situation today.

One of the things which stands out prominently in the picture of the first World War is the uncritical identification of the cause of Christianity with the cause of the Allied Nations. "The flag and the Cross," a trusted Christian leader declared in 1917, "are now both working for the same ends." This over-idealization of the Allied cause came to clearest focus in the work of what was called The Committee on the Moral Aims of the War, initiated by the Church Peace Union (which had been created by Andrew Carnegie's benefaction shortly before the war) and enthusiastically supported by the churches. The "moral aims" were specifically those which had been enunciated by the American Government, including President Wilson's commitment to a League of Nations. The churches accepted the governmental aims without qualification, baptizing them in wholesale fashion with the Christian name, and made little or no independent effort to formulate objectives derived from a consideration of Christianity itself. As one of the leading spokesmen of the movement said, "The Church is to express the spirit which moves the

nation." In the Church's attitude toward the war, he added, there is "no occasion for hesitancy, reservation, moral perplexities, conscientious objections." There was a conspicuous lack of any sense of tension between what the Church stood for and what the nation stood for.

Today the churches are much more independent in their judgment. Nothing is more evident than their unwillingness to make any general or sweeping identification of their interests with those of the United Nations. Even in those church circles in which support of the war is strongest, the war is not described as a holy crusade. The prevailing attitude is that the war is a grim necessity which Christians cannot escape and which they must meet resolutely because every alternative is worse than war. This sober realism stands out in sharp contrast with the mood of 1917.

The recollection of what happened in the churches then is probably an important factor in keeping them today from making an easy identification of Christianity and patriotism. One wonders, however, whether the pendulum of reaction from 1917 has not swung to an unjustified extreme in the opposite direction. If Christians of twenty-five years ago were uncritical in assuming that the issues of the war were identical with those of Christianity, there are Christians today who are equally uncritical in assuming that nothing of deep moral and spiritual significance is now at stake.

### *Distinctive Function of the Church Maintained*

There was also in 1917-1918 less sensitiveness to the need of maintaining the distinctive function of the Church in wartime than prevails today. The main work of the war commissions then as now, was, of course, in the area of such definite religious service as furnishing chaplains and camp pastors and keeping in touch with the men who had gone out from the churches into the armed forces. But in the first War the churches were also enthusiastic in furthering all the enterprises of the government.

Since the people who make up the membership of the churches are citizens as well as churchmen, it is never possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between what they do in their relation to the State and what they do in their relation to the Church. In 1917, however, the distinction was not felt to be very significant. Since the conflict was generally regarded as "a truly Holy War," projects that helped to win it seemed appropriate for the Church. Churches participated actively in the sale of Liberty Bonds and helped to promote Liberty Loan Sundays. One of the strongest and most active denominational war commissions, in a record of its work, emphasized the extent to which it "had mediated between the government and the churches in such work as that of food conservation, support of the Red Cross, war loans, etc." and also in mobilizing "the mind of America for the carrying on and winning of the war." Not a few pastors urged their members to enlist in the Army. On the whole, the churches did not do much to restrain the hysteria of hate which mounted rapidly as atrocity stories were reported.

Today there are ample evidences that religious leaders are more concerned to "let the Church be the Church." If clergymen serve as "minute men" for bond sales their activities are usually in the community-at-large rather than in the churches. There is little use of the pulpit for arousing the people to prosecute the war. As for "war hatred" the churches, both in England and America, are singularly free of it. Even at the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, his "bidding prayer" included a petition for "our enemies." This is characteristic of the temper in the churches today.

But, again, the question arises whether the churches of 1942, avoiding the pitfall of 1917, have not fallen into another pitfall on the other side. In some quarters the concern to keep their own spiritual function clear has resulted in an aloofness toward the war, which could only be justified on the assumption that it makes no difference, from a Christian standpoint, which side wins. Churches which have long insisted that they cannot be aloof from social, economic, political and international problems now appear as pro-

tagonists of the view that they should remain aloof from the greatest social, economic, political and international issue of our time.

### *Treatment of Conscientious Objectors*

In the first World War the record of the churches with reference to conscientious objectors left much to be desired. Their official position, as defined at the meeting of the Federal Council of Churches in May, 1917, when a wartime program was outlined and the General War-Time Commission projected, was one of clear recognition of a duty to defend the rights of the individual conscience. But, under the pressure of war propaganda, the avowed intention failed to crystallize in action. Norman Thomas even declared that he found it "easier to talk with military officials and representatives of the War Department on this subject than with the high officials of the Christian Church." This was doubtless a rhetorical exaggeration but it is fair to say that the leaders of the churches, preoccupied with other tasks, did not give much evidence that they regarded the treatment of the conscientious objector as a serious moral issue. Certainly much more might have been done to keep "conscientious objectors" from being popularly regarded as "slackers" and from suffering heartless imprisonment. If they had been accorded respect and fellowship in the churches, they might have received less injustice at the hands of the government and an unthinking public.

In the present war the attitude of the churches is strikingly different. Not a few Christian leaders seem to show more consideration for the conscientious objector than for the conscientious participant. Apparently the tendency in the first World War to identify Christianity with an unqualified support of the war produced, by way of reaction, a tendency to identify Christianity with pacifism. One absolutism led to another absolutism. The failure to be discriminating with reference to the situation in 1917-1918 led to subsequent failure to be discriminating with reference to moral issues involved in the Nazi revolution, and made it fatally easy to assume that the present war is nothing but another struggle between two imperialisms.

### *Concern for Character of Peace*

In the first World War there was far less concern than today for the character of the peace that should follow the war. The mood of millennial expectation that the victory of the Allies would almost automatically "make the world safe for democracy" was fairly widespread. There was a Utopian optimism that permanent peace would be ushered in by the defeat of Germany. There was, it is true, great interest in the



creation of the League of Nations, but little realistic examination of the enormous difficulties to be surmounted.

Today the leadership of the churches is conspicuously interested in the character of the post-war world. Perhaps, however, there is a present danger of being as unrealistic about the war as our predecessors of 1917-1918 were about the peace. In the case of certain churchmen (though not of most) enthusiasm over the issues of the future peace may be a form of "escapism" from the issues of the war. At least there is need for a reminder that it is gratuitous to talk about a "Christian peace" in case Hitler wins the war! Even when we grant (as we must) that a military triumph of the United Nations will not, *ipso facto*, insure a better world, we must insist that their victory is a pre-condition to our having even a reasonable opportunity to carry out any plans for such a world order as thoughtful Christians are now discussing.

#### *Ecumenical Movement*

In the first World War the ecumenical spirit had not yet come to be deeply felt in the churches. Only one of the great modern ecumenical gatherings, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, had been held. The World Alliance for International Friendship through the churches had just been organized but the coming of the war had prevented its development internationally. All contacts between the churches on opposite sides of the battle-line were broken. There was virtually no communication of any kind between leaders of the churches on different sides of the struggle. The result was that the post-war process of knitting up the broken strands of fellowship was slow and difficult.

Today the situation is a much happier one. The World Council of Churches, although it exists only in the form of a Provisional Committee, has been able to function in an unprecedented way. It has maintained its headquarters in Geneva uninterruptedly with a little ecumenical staff that includes Christians of Dutch, German, French, Swedish and Swiss citizenship in a single office, in constant contact by cable and mails with their colleagues in Great Britain, the United States and other lands. An "International Christian Press and Information Service" provides an exchange of information about the activity of the churches in all parts of the world. Members of the Staff have been able to make personal visits to nearly all of the European countries. Thus the churches of warring nations have been kept from being wholly isolated from one another. The office of the World Council has also been able to promote, to some extent, an exchange of views as to the kind of world order that should be sought after the war, to carry on ac-

tivities in behalf of refugees and to provide a chaplaincy service to prisoners of war on both sides of the struggle. The maintenance of a real measure of ecumenical fellowship in spite of all the strains of the war is the point of greatest advance in the churches between 1917 and 1942.

## Signs of the Times

ANY time of crisis, especially if that crisis endangers the very scaffolding of society, brings into bold relief certain traditional uncertainties. This is a common experience in the life of individual Christians: it is in some moment of fierce testing that he either brings his faith into sharp relevance with his need, or discards it as too broad and remote a generalization for the crisis that confronts him. Some such testing time as this now falls upon all who are part of the Christian enterprise.

The fact is that we are too inured to broad generalizations to be able to sort out one tree from the global woods in which we grope our way. We have made some progress, as groups of Christians, in building up our awareness of social maladjustment in one locality to a consideration of the total national problem of which it is a part. Yet the very phrase "inter-racial relationships" anesthetizes us into the impotence of those who believe that a problem is solved when it is conceived—and put into a resolution. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ has recently made a national inventory in terms of the "Social Ideals of the Churches." With two exceptions, the statement is "otherwise made up of declarations which, it was believed, one could scarcely attack without repudiating Christianity itself." In the shifting scene many of the ethical generalizations in the "Social Ideals of the Churches" have, in part, come to life through government action. No one can say how much climate for these actions has been made by the statements of religious bodies, but there is no doubt but that many individual Christians have become vaguely uncomfortable about the old formula that response to social need could be satisfied by a statement about it.

Any one who has lived through episodes in which groups have tried to arrive at these spaciouly phrased formulas knows that the greater the differences of opinion, the broader are the words employed to express the mind of the group. The urge to express responsibility to do something about a grave social problem is sicklied over with the pale cast of concern for unity; the traditional pattern for groups of Christians is to preserve the unity of the group.

Around the next corner we may meet whole moun-

tain ranges of issues far more divisive than any that we have known. It is one thing to stand for the idea of an interdependent world order and quite another to meet that idea clothed in terms of specific legislative proposals. As the scene sharpens from broad generalizations about the world that we want into the cutting edges of definite proposals, there is no certainty that the response of the followers of Jesus will bear the marks of any insistence peculiar to their faith. Today, when the issue of the military struggle hangs in the balance, our chief concern is to maintain the unity of great bodies of Christians; tomorrow, if tomorrow brings the opportunity to build the world anew, may again find us at the old task of preserving unity for unity's sake.

There is another uncertainty in our minds. Shall we retire into the comfortable belief that God's purpose for the world is timeless? Or shall we look upon the present world crisis as one which will determine the destiny of men for years past our reckoning? If there is no decisive significance in the struggle of the United Nations, this period of world revolution and chaos is, for the Christian enterprise, nothing more than a senseless moratorium. We look for a day when justice shall roll down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream, and lose our opportunity to fight injustice organized on such a scale as history has never seen.

The Christian outlook on life has particularly fitted us to understand the present world scene. To house the idea of the Kingdom of God is to become accustomed to think and to plan in global terms. The literature of Christian worship has habituated us to the Christian concept of man—a creature compounded of good and evil, as able to rise to heights of heroic unselfishness as to descend to the brutal. In the reservoir of Christian faith and experience there should be resources for helping people to understand the scene in which they play their tragic roles.

But somewhere we have missed the road. At a time when the intangible symbols of the spiritual need to be made clearly relevant, they are too often removed into meaningless abstractions which the Christian enterprise must "conserve." In an era in which any one collection of twenty-four hours may determine an age-long future, we leap the present crisis to talk about a post-war world.

If there is to be a post-war world in which we shall have opportunity to make use of the painful lessons of today, we shall need then to reconstrue our programs of religious education. In that day the things which cannot be shaken will have to be brought down from Sinai and put into the context of the ethical decisions which we shall be progressively called upon to make.

RHODA E. McCULLOCH.

## John Baillie's Report

THE special Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on "The Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis" made a further report to the Assembly in May. The chairman of the Commission is Professor John Baillie of Edinburgh University. The report deals with the Christian life in all of its aspects under seven general headings. They are as follows:

1. The Presentation of the Christian Faith to the World of Today
2. The Nature and Extent of the Church's Concern in the Civil Order
3. The Church Life and Organization
4. Marriage and the Family
5. Education
6. Social and Industrial Life
7. International Reconstruction

A section on "The Ideals of Western Civilization" reads in part as follows:

"It follows from this that the ethical standards of the Christian, however closely they may sometimes appear to resemble those of a Western culture which has detached itself from the Gospel, can never really be the same. There is therefore urgent need that men should be given a new understanding of the nature of the Christian ethical teaching and of its foundations in the redemption wrought by Christ. When our gallant fellow countrymen are asked to name the ideals which they are now so valiantly fighting to defend, they will usually, as we have seen, mention such ideals as the sacredness of human personality, the rights of man, freedom of thought and of speech, justice, humanity, and equality. Such an answer is often returned by Christians and non-Christians alike, and it is a good answer so far as it goes. Moreover, we may surely cherish the hope and belief that the new unity thus given to the nation, the common sacrifices now being endured with these aims in view, and all the poignant and exhilarating experiences through which we are passing in our efforts to defend them, may by God's grace result in their being woven into the fabric of our national life more intimately and inextricably than ever in the past. Yet this is unlikely to happen unless the ideals themselves are further fortified and purified by a return to that source from which they drew their first life. Most of them have their original roots in the Christian religion, and the influence of Christianity has had more to do than any other influence with their introduction into the European mind. They are now, however,

commonly presented to us in a detached and uprooted form which makes them appear capable of being accepted by men who have lost all touch with their background in Christian belief. There is a good obverse side to this, since it means that the leaven of Christian ideals is to some extent influencing the mind and conduct even of secular society, and that in defense of some of these ideals non-Christians are found fighting side by side with the members of the Christian Church. At a later point in this report we shall therefore have to inquire whether a certain relative detachment of our social ideals from their background of Christian doctrine and worship is not for some purposes necessary, if there is to be a common cause in which Christians and non-Christians can alike participate. Yet if such detachment passes these proper relative limits, it is bound to bring in its wake two disastrous results.

#### *The Church's Concern in the Civil Order*

"It is an urgent necessity of the present time that

Christians should attain a new clarity of mind as to the relation of the Church to this civil ordering of society. The prevalent uncertainty of thought on the matter is witnessed to by the fact that the criticisms passed on the Church's attitude to social, economic, and political questions are of two precisely opposite and contrary kinds, so that those who represent the Church often find themselves, as it were, between two fires. On the one hand, there are those who resent the Church's intrusion into any of these spheres and insist that, instead of meddling in affairs about which she knows nothing, she should confine herself strictly to her own proper business of the preaching of eternal salvation. On the other hand, there are those who bitterly reproach the Church with her otherworldliness, with a concern for inward renewal which (however fully justified in itself) is largely stultified by her apparent indifference to outward conditions which militate against its effective realization by large masses of people, and generally with a too complacent acceptance of the existing order of society."

## The World Church: News and Notes

### **French Hierarchy Protest Jewish Deportation**

The reports from the occupied and unoccupied zones of France have brought to light a growing tension between the Church and State on account of the vast program of deportation of Jews which the government has adopted under protection from Germany. The temper of the Catholic hierarchy is expressed in a pastoral letter recently written by Jules Geraud Sallège, Archbishop of Toulouse, publication of which has been forbidden by Pierre Laval. The Archbishop writes:

"There is a Christian morality, there is a human morality, that impose duties and confer rights. These duties and these rights derive from the very nature of man. They may be violated. No mortal has power to suppress them.

"That children, women, men, fathers, mothers should be treated as a wretched herd, that members of the same family should be separated from one another and embarked for unknown destinations, was a sad spectacle reserved for our times to see.

"Why does the right of asylum no longer exist in our churches?

"Why are we a vanquished people?

"Lord have pity upon us!

"Our Lady, pray for France!

"In our diocese moving scenes have been enacted in the camps of Noe and Recebedon [concentration camps near Toulouse from which Jews have been taken to the line of demarcation, there to be placed in German hands]. These Jews are men, these Jewesses are women; these

aliens are men and women. All is not permissible against them, against these men and women, against these fathers and mothers. They belong to mankind. They are our brethren as are so many others. No Christian can forget that. . . ."

The tension between the Catholic hierarchy and the Pétain-Laval government was greatly increased by Laval's imprisonment of several Catholic priests on September 18th because they greatly protested against the deportation of the Jews. Though portions of the church have been friendly to Marshal Pétain because of his favorable attitude toward Catholicism, these anti-Jewish measures have impaired the relationship between the Catholic hierarchy and Pétain. Protestant bodies have also protested to the government.

### **Situation of the Protestant Churches in Spain**

The situation of the Protestant Churches in Spain remains serious. Protestant worship is forbidden in the great majority of the towns. Recently the Protestant Church at Malaga was closed. In the few towns and villages where the chapels are not yet closed, public worship may be forbidden at any moment, for there is no parish whose activity is authorized by a permission legally proof against attack.

The question of Protestant schools is still more serious. They have been "provisionally suspended." It has more than once been asked how long this provisional period will last, and the answer has been that the Protestant



schools could not be re-opened before the State schools were sufficiently reorganized. This creates an extremely delicate situation for the Protestant families, for some schools demand a Roman Catholic certificate of baptism and insist that the children must take part in Catholic religious instruction.

I. C. P. I. S. Geneva

### **Inter-American Seminar on Social Studies**

The Inter-American Seminar on Social Studies called by the National Catholic Welfare Conference and attended by many delegates from South America as well as this country adopted a very significant program on social policy. The statement declares in part:

"Democracy, whatever its deficiencies may have been in the past, is certainly opposed to totalitarianism, and when it is directed by Christian principles constitutes a system under which Christian living can be best achieved. Individualistic democracy only recently has begun to recognize that the normal life of a nation requires, besides political self-government, a vast network of self-governing organized groups.

"Self-governing families, self-governing industries and professions, a self-governing church, self-governing cultural organizations are of the very nature of a sound democracy as agents, along with government, of the general good. This organic, closely interrelated democracy, we must build. . . .

"This earth and the people of the earth do not exist for lone individuals, single families or single nations. God gave the earth to all mankind and made men brothers. Transcending, but including the individual, family and national rights is the obligation to develop the resources of the earth and to distribute the goods that man thus co-creates with God for the increasing well-being of all mankind. Within this principle come not only the rights of nations to live and live well, but the rights of families within the nations. . . .

"International collaboration, whole and sincere, is imperative to conquer the crisis and to organize the post-war world on a firm foundation. The egoism that often has been the basic rule of many a nation must give way to universal values. . . ."

### **Germany on Dr. Temple**

The Nazi-controlled Luxemburg radio station had an amusing account of the significance of Dr. Temple's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. It declared that Temple was appointed for the purpose of "making the pro-Red policy of Sir Stafford Cripps acceptable to those churchmen who still entertain doubts whether doctrines made in Moscow are an Ersatz for Britain's traditional economic structure." It declared that Dr. Temple's program for post-war reconstruction was a "camouflage of Bolshevik methods by Christian phraseology." The Berlin radio, on the other hand, claimed Dr. Temple as a convert to National Socialism and declared that "Dr. Temple's program is taken point by point from National Socialism though it is not so comprehensive."

### **Death of Dr. S. K. Datta**

The cabled news from India of the sudden death by heart failure of Dr. S. D. Datta, Principal of Forman Christian College and President of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Association, brings a sense of personal loss to his many admirers and friends scattered throughout the world. He was student, professor, author, statesman, YMCA worker, college President, councillor, and friend. His was one of those rare lives which was at home in two worlds—the East and the West.

His relationship to the YMCA was varied. He headed the YMCA work for the Indian troops in France during 1914-1918. He served the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon as National Secretary and President. He was a member of the staff of the World's Committee of the YMCA for five years and one of its Vice-Presidents at the time of his death. The YMCA was "one of his first loves" for he found in it genuine world wide fellowship.

I. C. P. I. S. Geneva

### **The Position of the Theological Faculties at the German Universities**

In an address to scholars of all faculties on "Problem and Progress in Theology," Professor Althaus of Erlangen has made the following statements regarding the position of the theological faculties in the German Universities:

"The position of our faculties was formerly an expression of the fact that the German nation regarded the preparation of a scientifically educated clergy and the public representation of Christianity in the world of learning as a vitally important concern of its own. Now the religious situation has doubtless become different—the relative Christian solidarity has been lost inwardly, for a long time, outwardly for some little time. We must see this situation and take account of it. But how? Certainly religious controversy will be our lot for some time to come. We must acknowledge that. A religious solidarity of the German people outside Christianity is not to be expected. Christianity will in any case remain the living spiritual home for a large proportion of the Germans, if it maintains the freedom to assert its spiritual claim in public, if, that is, religious controversy in Germany chivalrously remains an intellectual struggle on equal terms. . . .

"The only arrangement adequate to express this significance of Christianity for our nation would be that it should maintain its place and its full honor at the Universities in the form of theological faculties. If other religious types are also to be represented by professorial chairs there, we can only wish that the spirits represented will cross weapons in a knightly way. We shall not fail to be present. The problem of the religious situation cannot be solved by the exclusion of the theological partners from the Universities. We Germans must accept the situation of undecided spiritual conflict—especially we at the Universities. At and from the Universities the greatest battles of our German spiritual

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history have been fought. May the Universities of the future be worthy of this great tradition."

I. C. P. I. S. Geneva

## Hostages in Holland

The Nazis have taken 450 hostages in Holland. They have been carefully picked and represent the leadership of the nation in all spheres of influence. They are subject to execution whenever the Nazis decide to avenge any of the numerous acts of sabotage. Among the hostages are Dr. Henrik Kraemer, author of *The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World* and the best known authority in Holland on missions.

## "Praying for Victory"—A Rejoinder to W. Burnett Easton

THE famous soliloquy attributed to Abraham Lincoln, as he entered the deep shadows of the Civil War crisis, employed in part the following language: "I know there is a God and that He hates injustice and slavery. I know I am right for I know that liberty is right. I am nothing, but truth is everything. I may not see the end, but it will come, and I shall be vindicated."

Compare these words with Rev. Mr. Easton's statement: "The chief reason for not praying for victory is that *we simply do not know* whether an Allied victory, from God's perspective, is the best thing." Yet the issue between liberty and slavery is as clearly drawn now as in 1861, and on a vastly extended scale. Do not Mr. Easton's words betray a tragic decline from Lincoln's faith and unfaltering confidence grounded in God? Without such

grounding, what becomes of morale? "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Mr. Easton, "as a political animal and citizen of a Democracy" is ready to work and "if necessary, I suppose, die for it," (not a very thrilling expression of devotion, I submit) but he can't pray for its success. Yet in the next paragraph he assures us "we may pray for courage to carry out such understanding (of duty) as we have to the last full measure of devotion." Why pray *for courage* to strive to the death in behalf of a government for whose survival we *must not* pray, when this courage we *are* to pray for is the indispensable prerequisite to, and promise of, the success of the government for which, still we must not pray? How does such a distinction justify itself to reason? How does it contribute to the improvement of "a political animal"?

Mr. Easton fears that to pray for Democracy implies that we know better than God what is politically needed on this planet. If this is implied in the prayer for Democracy, why not equally in prayer for anything else? So why ask God for anything at all? And, furthermore, since God "is quite well aware of our desires" in advance of our expressing them, again why pray at all? Are not these the time-worn arguments to show the futility of all prayer?

Once more, the fine-spun distinction between praying about and praying for political institutions we are willing to work and die for, leaves me cold. One finds oneself curious to know more about the spiritual exercise of praying about what one desires without praying for it, since "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." Moreover, the easy generalization that "the great souls of the Bible did not pray for the advancement of their desires" awaits confirmation. Abraham and David and Isaiah and Jesus and Paul rank as "great souls," a casual reading of whose recorded prayers challenges the accuracy of Mr. Easton's generalization.

I fear some of the current writing on "Praying for Victory" fatally discounts God and prayer, promotes defeatism and paralyzes effort. I fear Mr. Easton's position will prove devastating to Allied morale in the supreme crisis confronting civilization just in proportion as it is accepted and acted upon.

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